DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 066 370 SO 003 072

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TITLE Attitudes Toward Black Americans Held by Rural and Urban White Early Childhood Subjects Based Upon Multi-Ethnic Social Studies Materials.
PUB DATE Jul 70
NOTE 17p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Attitudes; *Behavior Change; *Changing Attitudes; *Discriminatory Attitudes (Social); *Educational Research; Elementary Education; *Racial Attitudes; Social Attitudes; Social Studies; Student Attitudes

ABSTRACT

This study measures the attitudinal change of elementary white students toward Black Americans after reading and participating in teacher directed discussion of social studies multi-ethnic literary materials. In addition to developing the teacher directed reading and discussion approach, the research sought to determine if attitudinal change would occur in both urban and rural schools. One hundred and four whites ages 7 to 7 served as subjects; half of whom were from urban and half from rural schools. Both schools contained experimental and control groups, the experimental one reading texts with equal emphasis on urban and rural settings and participating in classroom discussion about Black feelings, situations, and contributions. "An Attitudinal Questionnaire Concerning Black Americans", the instrument used in the pre-test and post-test, measured the white children's attitudinal change toward the Negro. The basic conclusion drawn from the experiment is that reading and discussion of multi-ethnic social studies materials can influence attitudes toward Black Americans significantly in white urban children, and favorably in rural children, suggesting that racial harmony can be fostered in a classroom. (SJM)

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ED 066370

ATTITUDES TOWARD BLACK AMERICANS HELD BY RURAL AND URBAN WHITE EARLY CHILDHOOD SUBJECTS BASED UPON MULTI-ETHNIC SOCIAL STUDIES MATERIALS

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July, 1970

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Abstract

Investigating the reading and discussion of selected Social Studies materials concerning black Americans on 104 white urban and rural children of early childhood age. In urban school A, and in the replication, rural school B, the experimental groups independently and significantly differed from each other when reading and discussion approaches of Social Studies materials of black Americans were initiated. The control groups did not significantly differ from each other in schools A and B.

Attitude dispositions about black Americans in and were acquired by young children of early education age.

Attitudes Toward Black Americans Held by Rural and Urban White Early Childhood Subjects Based Upon Multi-ethnic Social Studies Materials

During recent years and increasing number of multi-ethnic Social Studies texts, reading books, and pamphlets have appeared for children in early childhoos education (e.g. three to eight year old children or nursery to third grade). The multi-ethnic materials have generally focused upon black, Indian, or other minority groups, and white children living, playing, and working harmoniously together in some community setting. The basic assumption underlying these texts and other Social Studies materials was the notion that "children are influenced by what they read". However, educationists have found it difficult to understand what actually happens to the reader, that is, what effect does reading material have on the reader? Russell (1954, p. 335), a language arts researcher contended that:

> From a research point of view the effects of reading are an uncharted wasteland in an otherwise well mapped territory.

Also within the language arts content field some research was completed which suggested that reading may influence attitudes. Over three decades, R. Loudermilk (1939), M. Agnes (1949), P. Witty (1950), J.J. DeBoer (1951), A.S. McKillop (1952), J.R. Squire (1956), and F.L. Fisher (1966)

The research study was presented at the National Convention of the National Council for the Social Studies in Denver, Colorado in October, 1971 under the theme, Society in Crisis. Support for this study came from the Department of Early Childhood-Elementary Education at the University of Maryland-College Park. The author also wished to thank Mr. Lee hopkins of Scholastic Press-New Jersey for supplying selected multi-ethnic Social Studies materials and to Mr. Donald Holeste, Principal, Franklin Elementary School in Farmer City, Illinois for providing subjects used in the research.

were several writers who supported attitude change through reading.

Within the social studies, few researchers were concerned with multi-ethnic aspects and "attitude change", and almost none investigated multi-ethnic texts, attitude change, and young children, ages three to eight. However, some investigations were conducted with young children's political attitudes. Using survey techniques, Greenstein (1965), Hess & Easton (1960), and Hess & Torney (1968) found that attitudes about political objects existed in seven and eight year old children and secondly, that attitudes in young children were developmental and changed as a function of age related experiences with attitude objects.

Outside the Social Studies and Language Arts, Yawkey (1968, 1970, 1971) using a training and transfer paradigm generally supported the above notions that: (1) young children, ages three to eight, possessed and/or could acquire attitudinal dispositions toward objects through planned experiences; and, (2) these attitudinal dispositions were developmental and changed with age. Perhaps, like the language arts, the paucity of research with Social Studies multi-ethnic materials, and young children, ages three to eight, may, in part, be explained by the implicit assumption that covert reading experiences influence attitudes.

The present research sought to:

1. empirically investigate influences, if any, of selected multi-ethnic social studies readings with historical, cultural, and social aspects of black Americans on white children's attitudes toward this group;

2. help initiate and build teacher directed reading and discussion approach based upon Social Studies multi-ethnic publications from Scholastic Press of New Jersey;

3. utilize an urban school, School A, as a replication of research procedures in a rural school, School B, with similar experimental and control groups.

Would reading and teacher directed discussion of social studies multi-ethnic literary materials change the subjects' attitudes in a direction favorable to the American Black? This question was the primary concern of the present study.

Throughout this research, attitudes (Krech, et.al., 1962, 177) was interpreted as:

> An enduring system of positive or negative evaluations, emotional feelings, and pro- and con- action tendencies with respect to a social object.

Method

Subjects

A total of 104 subjects (Ss), ages 7 to 7½, served as Ss in the study. One half of the Ss or 52 white children were obtained from an urban school (A) representing middle to upper middle class socio-economic population (SES). The other 52 white Ss, obtained from a rural school (B), were representative of a low-middle to middle SES. SES was determined by the white and blue collar occu ations of the childrens' fathers. The rural and urban populations both contained experimental and control groups. The I.Q., represented by Non-Verbal Lorge Thordike Tests did not significantly vary from urban to rural experimental or control Ss n either school A or B. Sex of the Ss was not of interest in this study.

Stimuli

Across schools and groups, all Ss were pretested using an attitude questionnaire at the beginning of the experiment and posttested four weeks later at the conclusion of the research. The 12 item test, "An Attitude Questionnaire Concerning Black Americans" was constructed from Wayne State University's "An Opinionnaire in Intergroup Relations: AS-20" and Thurstone's "Attitude Toward the Negro-Form B". Because of high reliability coefficients and the ease of applying these selected statements from the two instruments, both questionnaires were initially adapted and used. Vocabulary reduction to the "average" third grader, including items from both questionnaires that may have been of great interest to the populations, eliminating those items which may have been irrelevant to the early childhood population, and using interval scales, 1-2-3 (stringly negative and utilized in six items), and 3-2-1 (strongly positive utilized in six items) reflecting direction of the statements, were the only changes made on the original questionnaires. A list of teacher directions that were to be followed in introducing and administering the pre- and post-tests to the experimental and control groups, accompanied each set of questionnaires. Examples of both the teacher directions to the instrument and the questionnaire, "An Attitude Questionnaire Concerning Black Americans for Early Childhood Education" appeared in Appendix A and B respectively.

Procedure

Pre-tests were administered in all four groups in both schools on the same day. The following day, both experimental groups in urban

school A and rural school B were given the treatment. In the experimental groups, the teachers read and the teachers and classes discusses six social studies multi-ethnic texts. These texts mainly concentrated upon black feelings, situations, ideas, and the contributions that black Americans have made to cultural, political, and scientific developments in the United States. Three of the multi-ethnic texts emphasized urban and three represented rural settings. Both urban and rural experimental groups completed the same six books. The multi-ethnic materials were also read in the same order across experimental groups. Reading and discussion of these multi-ethnic books occurred four times a week (e.g. Monday through Thursday), 35 minutes per day, in both experimental groups. The time of the day in which the story and discussion was presented was alternated from morning to afternoon in the experimental groups.

All six multi-ethnic texts were described by the Council on Interracial Books as "readable" by third grade children. The Council also contended that these selected texts portrayed the black American as a real human. The multi-ethnic social studies texts donated by Scholastic Press of New Jersey illustrating their urban-rural designations and indicating their sequential order of reading were:

1. Runaway Slave, The Story of Harriet Tubman (McGovern) - rural
2. What Mary Jo Shared (Udry) - urban
3. The Cowboy (Peterson) - rural
4. The Snowy Day (Keats) - urban
5. Congo Boy (Clark) - rural
6. Frederick Douglass Fights for Freedom (Mill) - urban

The control groups in school A and school B received no treatment of any kind.

Experimental Design

The overall experimental design was four correlated t-tests of difference between means in experimental and control groups in school A and school B. Following the procedures outlined by Edwards (1966) for correlated t-tests, each experimental and control S was pre- and post-tested. For each administration of the questionnaire, the minimum and maximum possible scores for each experimental and control S were 0 and 12 respectively.

Results

The main hypothesis stated in null form was that there would be no significant difference in attitude change in a direction favorable to the American black for any of the groups.

The one-tailed correlated t-tests (Edwards, 1966) between experimental groups in school A and school B revealed a significant difference between pre- and post-test means. The null hypothesis that multi-ethnic social studies materials, when read and discussed by the teacher and early child students would not change attitudes in a direction favorable to the American black was rejected.

In school A, the urban school, the null hypothesis was rejected on the basis of the observed t-test statistic of -2.012 (= .05, df=25) and the t of -1.708 (= .05, df=25) required for significance. In school B, the rural school, the null hypothesis was rejected on the basis of the observed t-test statistic of -4.180 (=.05, df=25) and the t of -1.300 (= .05, df=25) required for significance.

The correlated one-tailed t-test statistics between control groups in school A and B were not significant. In urban school A, the null hypothesis of no difference was not rejected on the basis of the observed one-tailed t-test statistic of -1.420 (= .05, df=25) and the t of -1.708 (= .05, df=25) required for significance. In rural school B, the null hypothesis was also not rejected on the basis on the observed one-tailed t-test statistic of -1.300 (= .05, df=25) required for significance.

For school A and school B, pre- and post-test means, one-tailed t-tests, and the = .05 percent points were presented in Tables 1 and 2 respectively.

TABLE 1 (URBAN SCHOOL A)

PRE-TEST, POST-TEST MEANS, ONE TAILED t-TEST STATISTIC AND = .05 PERCENT POINTS

GROUPS	X PRE-TEST	X-POST-TEST	t-TEST STATISTIC	.05 PERCENT POINT
CONTROL	29.58	30.26	-1.420	non-significant -1.708
EXPERIMENTAL	30.31	31.902	-2.012	significant -1.708

TABLE 2 (RURAL SCHOOL B, AN EXPERIMENTAL REPETITION)

PRE-TEST, POST-TEST MEANS, ONE TAILED t-TEST STATISTICS AND = .05 PERCENT POINTS

GROUPS	X PRE-TEST	X POST-TEST	t-TEST STATISTIC	.05 PERCENT POINT
CONTROL	24.23	24.89	-1.300	non-significant -1.708
EXPERIMENTAL	24.92	28.35	-4.180	significant -1.708

Discussion

The present research dealt with Social Studies multi-ethnic materials, attitudes, and children, ages 7 and 7½. The major concern of

the study was to determine if reading and teacher directed discussion of selected social studies multi-ethnic literary material could change urban and rural children's attitudes in a direction favorable to the black American. First, the most obvious and basic conclusion drawn from the experiment is that reading and discussion of multi-ethnic Social Studies materials can influence attitudes toward black Americans in white urban and rural children, of early childhood age. The current research basically supported previous language arts research (Agnes, 1947; Fisher, 1966) dealing with attitude change and reading with ten and seventeen year old subjects. This study and the investigations of Hess & Easton (1960), Hess & Torney (1968), and Yawkey (1968, 1970, 1971) tended to confirm the importance of the early years of children when attitudinal dispositions and "response sets" are first developed and learned. The current study in school A with its replication and similar results in school B seem to lend greater support and reliability to the present study.

Although results from school A and school B were both statistically significant and in the same positive direction, an unexpected finding independently occurred in the results of the urban and rural schools. Although intelligence scores, as measured by Lorge Thorndike Non-Verbal Tests, between school A and school B did not significantly differ, the statistical results from rural school B, the replication, evidenced a significant treatment effect at the .01 percent point and the urban school A at the .05 percent point. Through a post hoc analysis of the results of this experiment, the populations involved, and "attitude-change theory" (Krech, D., et.al., 1962, 215), several points may be

delineated. Contact with blacks by rural population B did not occur in or outside of school because no black families lived within the borders of this particular school district. On the other hand, the urban population A had much contact with black children in the integrated elementary school and in their communities. Perhaps the attitudes of rural subjects were not strongly held because of little or no experiential contact with black Americans and thus were easily influenced by the Social Studies treatment. The attitudes of urban children who had many experiential contacts with black American children may have developed strong attitudes and thus were not so easily influenced by the multi-ethnic reading and classroom discussion approach. Said differently, the rural subjects may have had simple attitudes while the urban subjects developed multiplex attitudes toward black Americans with simple attitudes more susceptible to change than highly complex and multi-faceted ones (Krech, D., et.al., 1962, 216).

There were a number of distinct limitations to this study. The selection of subjects and of the Social Studies materials, the construction of the attitude questionnaire with possible sensitization effects from re-administration, and its methodological procedures were several such limitations.

Summary

With white children ages 7 and 7½, social studies multi-ethnic materials were used in urban school A and rural school B to establish what attitude changes, if any, toward black Americans would occur. The treatment effect was based upon a teacher directed reading and discussing

of selected Social Studies books. The results indicated:

1. Reading and discussing selected multi-ethnic social studies materials by the teacher and an urban early childhood class indicated a statistically significant attitude in a direction favorable to the American black.
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2. In a rural white early childhood class, reading and discussing multi-ethnic social studies materials by the teacher and the class indicated a favorable attitude change in whtie children toward the American black.

3. The replication of the experimentation in school B in terms of school A, both indicating statistically significant differences in relation to their respective control groups added some reliability to the hypothesis that reading and discussion of the social studies texts would change selected subjects in school A and B in a favorable direction to the American black.

Further research might suggest solutions of how reading changes attitudes and some of the factors that influence these changes.

1. How many class readings and discussions of social studies materials could be advantageously utilized in American early childhood and elementary classrooms in assisting and solving interpersonal problems and racial misunderstandings?

2. What implications does a favorable attitude change in an early childhood and elementary child toward minority groups have in terms of social studies curriculum construction in present American schools?

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APPENDIX A

Teacher Directions

PURPOSE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE: (TEACHER)

This is a study of attitudes toward the Black American held by third grade children. Having been adapted from two current race relations' inventories, An Opinionaire in Intergroup Relations-AS-20, and Attitude Toward Negroes-Form B, this particular questionnaire's vocabulary has been scaled down and checked for recognition and comprehension. To give another check upon recognition and comprehension, this questionnaire should be read to the children one sentence at a time.

This is not a test in any sense.

DIRECTIONS FOR THE TEACHER:

Since this is not a test, the children need not fill in their names, ages or sex. There is no time limit and the children should be given as much time as needed after you have finished reading each statement. Ordinarily, fifteen to twenty minutes is considered ample time for the entire questionnaire.

The teacher should not explain any of the sentences and the children should be asked to respond immediately in terms of "YES" (if they feel the statement is true), and "NO" (if they feel the statement is false) or "?" (if they can't decide).

DIRECTIONS FOR THE STUDENTS: Please read to the children.

This is a study of attitudes toward the Black American. On page one, you will find 12 sentences showing different attitudes toward the Black American. Since this is not a test we don't even want your names on the paper and there are no right or wrong answers because all girls' and boys' feelings are not the same.

I would like you to place a ring around "YES" if you think the sentence is true. Place a ring around "NO" if you disagree and think that this sentence is false. If you cannot decide whether the sentence is true or false, draw a ring around the question mark on your paper. Please remember there are no right or wrong answers. Therefore, I would like to know what you think and how you feel about the sentences.

Let's all go over the directions again.

1. If you think the sentence is true, ring the word "YES" on your paper.
2. If you think the sentence is false, ring the word "NO" on your paper.

3. If you can <u>not</u> decide whether the sentence should be "YES" or "NO", ring the question mark on your paper.

PLEASE ACCEPT ANY QUESTIONS AT THIS POINT CONCERNING THE DIRECTIONS

(To the teacher):
Please feel free to comment about any word or phrase you think is too difficult for the children.
Thank you for your co-operation.

APPENDIX B

ATTITUDE QUESTIONNAIRE CONCERNING THE BLACK AMERICAN FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

YES ? NO *(1) (2) (3)	In a group of people, Negroes are likely to be noisy and use bad words.
YES ? NO *(3) (2) (1)	Negroes should be allowed to talk freely about any topic they wish.
YES ? NO (1) (2) (3)	A Negro should <u>not</u> be elected leader of your third grade class.
YES ? NO (1) (2) (3)	In school, Negroes will do almost anything to get good grades.
YES ? NO (1) (2) (3)	Eating with a colored person would be very unpleasant.
YES ? NO (1) (2) (3)	It would be all right to say, "Negroes can <u>not</u> live in this house."
YES ? NO (3) (2) (1)	Negroes should be allowed to hold any job if they can do the work.
YES ? NO (3) (2) (1)	Colored people are valuable to our country.
YES ? NO (1) (2) (3)	Marriage between Negroes and white people should not be allowed.
YES ? NO (3) (2) (1)	Negro school children can do just as good work as white school children.
YES ? NO (3) (2) (1)	A Negro could become President of the United States if he had good ideas and people liked him.

* (1)-(2)-(3) (strongly negative)
* (3)-(2)-(1) (strongly positive)